

REMARKS

Applicants have carefully reviewed and considered the Office Action dated November 2, 2006, and the references cited therein. The Examiner is thanked for the consideration given the present patent application and for the indication of allowable subject matter. In response, applicants have cancelled, without prejudice, claims 4, 12, 13, 17-20, 23, 28, 34, and 46-57; amended claims 1, 5, 7, 11, 22, 24, 27, 29, 32, 35, 38, 40, and 44; and added new claims 58-62 to further define the invention. Applicants believe the application is now in condition for allowance. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration in light of the following remarks is respectfully requested.

With respect to amended claim 1, without acquiescing in any way to the substantive rejections made in the Office Action and merely to expedite the prosecution of the subject matter that the Office Action indicated is allowable, applicants have incorporated the substance of claim 12 and intervening claim 4 into amended claim 1 and cancelled claims 4 and 12. In addition, a non-narrowing amendment has been made to claim 1 to overcome the Section 112, Paragraph 2 rejection. Accordingly, as indicated by the Office Action, amended claim 1, which is effectively claim 12 rewritten in independent form, is in condition for allowance. Claims 2, 3, 5-11, 14-16, and 21 depend from amended claim 1, and, therefore, they contain the same patentable features thereof.

With respect to amended claim 22, without acquiescing in any way to the substantive rejections made in the Office Action and merely to expedite the prosecution of the subject matter that the Office Action indicated is allowable, applicants have incorporated the substance of claim 23 into amended claim 22 and cancelled claim 23. In addition, a non-narrowing amendment has been made to claim 22 to overcome the Section 112, Paragraph 2 rejection. Accordingly, as indicated by the Office Action, amended claim 22, which is effectively claim 23 rewritten in independent form, is in condition for allowance. Claims 24-26 depend from amended claim 22, and, therefore, they contain the same patentable features thereof.

With respect to amended claim 27, without acquiescing in any way to the substantive rejections made in the Office Action and merely to expedite the prosecution of the subject matter that the Office Action indicated is allowable, applicants have incorporated the substance of claim 28 into amended claim 27 and cancelled claim 28. Accordingly, as indicated by the Office

Action, amended claim 27, which is effectively claim 28 rewritten in independent form, is in condition for allowance. Claims 29-31 depend from amended claim 27, and, therefore, they contain the same patentable features thereof.

With respect to amended claim 32, without acquiescing in any way to the substantive rejections made in the Office Action and merely to expedite the prosecution of the subject matter that the Office Action indicated is allowable, applicants have incorporated the substance of claim 34 into amended claim 32 and cancelled claim 34. In addition, a non-narrowing amendment has been made to claim 32 to overcome the Section 112, Paragraph 2 rejection of claim 33. Accordingly, as indicated by the Office Action, amended claim 32, which is effectively claim 34 rewritten in independent form, is in condition for allowance. Claims 33 and 35-39 depend from amended claim 32, and, therefore, they contain the same patentable features thereof.

With respect to amended claim 40, a non-narrowing amendment has been made to claim 40 to overcome the Section 112, Paragraph 2 rejection. Claims 41-45 depend from amended claim 40, and, therefore, they contain the same patentable features thereof.

With respect to new claim 58, without acquiescing in any way to the substantive rejections made in the Office Action and merely to expedite the prosecution of the subject matter that the Office Action indicated is allowable, applicants have re-written original claim 13, including intervening claim 4, in independent form as new claim 58 and cancelled claim 13.

With respect to new claim 59, without acquiescing in any way to the substantive rejections made in the Office Action and merely to expedite the prosecution of the subject matter that the Office Action indicated is allowable, applicants have re-written original claim 17 in independent form as new claim 59 and cancelled claim 17. New claims 60-62 correspond to original claims 18-20, which in turn have been cancelled. Accordingly, as indicated by the Office Action, new claim 59 is in condition for allowance. Claims 60-62 depend from new claim 59, and, therefore, they contain the same patentable features thereof.

Applicants respectfully submit that the patent application is in condition for allowance. If, in the opinion of the Examiner, a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of the subject application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney.

Please charge any fees associated with this communication to Deposit Account 12-1216.

Respectfully submitted,



John M. Augustyn, Reg. No. 33,589
LEYDIG, VOIT & MAYER, LTD.
Two Prudential Plaza, Suite 4900
180 North Stetson Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60601-6731
(312) 616-5600 (telephone)
(312) 616-5700 (facsimile)

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